1-1-2014

Introduction [to *Cultivating Virtue: Perspectives from Philosophy, Theology, and Psychology*]

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Introduction

The last thirty years have seen a resurgence of interest in virtue in Anglo-American philosophy. Virtue ethics, an approach to normative theory that focuses on the character of the agent, has established itself as a legitimate alternative to consequentialism and deontology.[1] Work elucidating theories of virtue within these competing traditions has also moved forward.[2] Despite the rising interest in virtue, however, little attention has been paid to the question of how virtue is developed.[3] This volume aims to address that gap in the literature. It is a collection of mostly new essays solicited from philosophers, psychologists, and theologians, all in the forefront of research on virtue.[4] Each of their contributions focuses on some aspect of virtue development, either by highlighting virtue cultivation within distinctive traditions of psychological, ethical, or religious thought, by taking a developmental perspective to yield fresh insights into criticisms of virtue ethics, or by examining the science that explains virtue development. Russell and Driver investigate virtue cultivation or problems associated with it from Aristotelian and utilitarian perspectives, the latter focusing on sentimentalist virtue development, a theme taken up by Slote. Cureton and Hill and Swanton explore self-improvement, the former from a Kantian vantage point, the latter with an eye toward offering solutions to the problems of self-centeredness and virtue ethical right action. Slingerland examines contemporary psychology as well as virtue development in the Confucian tradition to counter situationist criticisms of virtue ethics. Flanagan, Bucar, and Herdt examine virtue cultivation in the Buddhist, Islamic, and Christian traditions, respectively. The essays by Narvaez, Thompson, and McAdams offer descriptive insights from psychology into virtue development. The result is a collection of extremely creative essays that not

only fills the current gap but also promises to stimulate new work on a relatively neglected yet vital topic.

Stimulating new work on virtue cultivation and related topics is a second aim of the volume. The deeper idea here is to shape the trajectory of research on virtue in new and fruitful ways. Focusing the attention of the best minds in the field on virtue development is a way of rounding out current research on virtue and offering new directions forward. As research on virtue cultivation progresses, the hope is that investigations of related areas will advance as well. For example, in saying something about virtue cultivation, we must also think about the development of personality, rationality, motivation, and emotions, and consider the roles of parents and supportive communities in virtue education. We must think about habituation and bodily practices. We must seek to integrate science into our thinking, investigate non-Western conceptions of virtue, and compare and contrast them with more familiar Western accounts. Finally, we should begin to acknowledge that theological perspectives on virtue can add value to philosophical discussions. In short, this volume aims to suggest to readers further research opportunities in multiple directions.

The volume is arranged in the following order. Russell begins with an Aristotelian perspective on virtue development, followed by Driver on utilitarianism, Slote on sentimentalism, Cureton and Hill on Kantianism, and Swanton on self-improvement. Slingerland and Flanagan leave the Western tradition to take readers into the nuances of Confucianism and Buddhism, respectively. Religious ethicists Bucar and Herdt follow with explorations of Islamic and Christian virtue cultivation. Finally, psychologists Narvaez, Thompson, and McAdams are given the last word, discussing virtue development from three different psychological perspectives.

Despite their differences, several common themes emerge in these presentations. The importance of early upbringing for the development of virtue is highlighted by Russell, Slote, and Flanagan, and reinforced in the essays by psychologists. Driver, Slote, Thompson, and Narvaez stress the importance of affect for the growth of virtue. Driver mines early sentimentalist thinkers for insights into virtue development, and Slote continues that tradition with a contemporary account. Slingerland and Swanton use developmental approaches to virtue to counter criticisms of virtue ethics. In the traditions explored by Bucar and Slingerland, bodily practices contribute to virtue development. Metaphysical assumptions form the background for virtue cultivation in the Buddhist and Kantian thought examined by Flanagan and Cureton and Hill. The importance of motivation is underscored by Russell, Swanton, and McAdams. McAdams explicitly relates his psychological view of virtue development to Aristotle's perspective. Bucar and Herdt

accentuate God's role in the acquisition of virtue. Finally, the importance of community is integral to the views of virtue cultivation offered by Herdt, Narvaez, and McAdams. Let us turn to an examination of each author's contribution.

In "Aristotle on Cultivating Virtue," Daniel C. Russell sketches an Aristotelian research program for virtue development. He articulates what Aristotle thinks virtue is and how it is acquired. Russell here seeks to show that Aristotle thinks virtue, its acquisition, and the competencies needed for it are mundane—that is, parts of our daily lives and of the ordinary ways in which we try to better ourselves. To develop virtue we must develop dispositions to choose and act for virtue-relevant goals. Virtue is dynamic; though virtue acquisition takes place as a person develops, it is an ongoing process, occurring even among mature agents. Russell's central contention is that light can be shed on our understanding of virtue acquisition by studying how skills are acquired. Thus, the notions of skill and of skill acquisition are at the heart of an Aristotelian perspective on cultivating virtue.

Russell argues that this emphasis on skill meshes well with contemporary psychology in two important respects. To understand the first respect, we need to note the distinction between path-dependent and path-independent ways of becoming moral. Path-independent approaches specify a moral ideal and then chart ways of reaching it. Lawrence Kohlberg's model of universal moral thinking is a case in point. By contrast, path-dependent approaches survey how people generally improve themselves, then extend this knowledge to an account of character development. As Russell notes, the psychologists Darcia Narvaez and Daniel K. Lapsley call these contrasting approaches "moralized psychology" and "psychologized morality," respectively. Russell argues that Aristotle's is a path-dependent approach, and hence, an example of psychologized morality.

A second respect in which Aristotle's view of virtue acquisition meshes well with contemporary psychology is in its emphasis on skill. Much work in psychology has been done on skill acquisition and expertise that is potentially useful for understanding character development. Since Aristotle was not concerned with specifying in fine detail the competencies needed for virtue, he can be viewed as setting out the broad contours of a research program to be filled in by later generations. In this regard, the psychology of skill acquisition is a promising area for ongoing research into virtue cultivation. Yet, Russell cautions that such a program faces hurdles. Unlike many contexts in which we acquire skills, virtue is messy. We cannot always learn it in structured environments that afford us opportunities to learn predictable regularities, nor do we always have the advantage of clear feedback. Despite these challenges, the psychology of skill acquisition remains

a fertile resource for further investigation into the nuances of Aristotelian virtue cultivation.

Julia Driver's piece, "Mill, Moral Sentimentalism, and the Cultivation of Virtue," examines utilitarian virtue cultivation through the work of John Stuart Mill. Driver begins by making the point that many virtues, for Mill, involve the perfection of our higher capacities for happiness or pleasure. Improvement in the virtues, Mill thinks, can be aided by higher educational institutions, but also by engaging with good literature. Through our reading of literature, history, and documentaries, Driver argues, we develop our abilities to put ourselves in the positions of others and take their perspectives. She develops this theme by examining the influence of moral sentimentalism on Mill's thought.

Though not all utilitarians are sentimentalists, Mill is influenced by sentimentalist concerns, such as the importance of natural sentiment—in particular, sympathy—as the basis for the other-regarding conduct utilitarianism requires. In this respect, Driver contends, Mill is similar to Hume. To be sure, Mill and Hume diverge in their accounts of virtue, yet a broadly sentimentalist approach, Driver urges, helps us to interpret Mill's cryptic remarks on the "art of life."

In *A System of Logic*, Mill discusses the art of life in terms of three separate spheres: prudence, morality, and aesthetics. He associates aesthetics with virtue and morality with right. Driver offers a way to conceptualize the spheres by taking Mill to separate being virtuous from acting rightly and wrongly. Her focus, however, is on how goodness in each sphere is to be realized. Among the qualities needed to realize goodness in one's life, Driver contends, is the ability to make good judgments about what it means to be virtuous and/or do one's duty. That is, being dutiful as well as virtuous are connected with the ability to make reliable judgments about duty and virtue. Virtue and aesthetics are related through attention, as Iris Murdoch urged, as well as through perspective-taking. Many philosophers endorse the view that one's moral sensitivities are enlarged by the ability to take the perspectives of others. Important information, such as the kinds of reasons that motivate others, is thereby attained. Perspective-taking is also a way of correcting emotions and of allowing us to shed idiosyncratic concerns and enlarge our social sympathies. We cannot be a fully utilitarian agent, Driver argues, unless we are virtuous—and that requires developing the kinds of qualities and skills needed to take the "larger view" made possible by expanded social sympathies.

Sentimentalist virtue development is the theme of the next essay. Michael Slote expands upon previous work to give a sentimentalist account of moral development in "The Roots of Empathy." Noting that explanations of

moral growth often begin with how children learn good behavior from loving parents, Slote urges us take a step back and examine how early parent-child interactions make these later educational processes possible or impossible. His account, though consistent with the view that genetic or brain abnormalities play a role in psychopathy, focuses on the need for parental love, and in particular, on the kinds of reactions to parental attitudes and behavior that can inhibit or facilitate moral development. Children who are denied parental love react with rage, which forecloses their capacities for basic associative or receptive empathy. This is the kind of empathy that allows us to feel what others are going through, and is the *sine qua non* of further moral development. By contrast, children who are loved by their parents respond with gratitude. Gratitude, Slote argues, is the emotional basis for further moral growth.

He begins by situating his account of gratitude within a sentimentalist framework in which empathy has a central role to play in moral development. Just as empathy and sympathy have been found to contribute to altruistic behavior, so, too, Slote contends, gratitude can facilitate altruism. Of special importance in moral development is a kind of diffuse or generalized gratitude that infants and children feel on having their need for parental love met. This generalized gratitude contrasts with the generalized rage or anger that those denied parental love can come to feel. Slote clarifies his points about diffuse or generalized gratitude by examining cases of adult gratitude. Not only are we grateful for benefits we are given, we are also grateful for the sympathetic attitudes and motives with which those boons are bestowed. In Slote's view, we "take in" those sympathetic attitudes and motives by a kind of associative or receptive empathy. Through this receptivity, we become sympathetic too, and this aroused sympathy, which Slote believes is gratitude, though focused mainly on our benefactor, can be spread to others or generalized. We feel gratitude intensely because it is aroused by benefits warmly bestowed on us, and this intensity of feeling makes it less likely than other emotions to lose its force when it is generalized.

Essentially the same processes that explain adult gratitude apply to gratitude in early childhood. Young children have basic capacities for empathy, Slote contends, which allow them to take in the love and sympathy they feel from their parents. This then generates gratitude—the diffusion to others of the love and sympathy the child has taken in. The early gratitude is necessary for further moral development. Children who do not receive parental love, but instead, are neglected or abused, respond with anger or rage—emotions which undercut their empathic capacities and preclude the possibility of moral growth. Slote concludes his piece by exploring some

implications of his sentimentalist account of the early wellsprings of moral development in empathy and gratitude for understandings of psychopathy and, especially, of care ethics.

Adam Cureton and Thomas Hill examine a different approach to virtue and moral education in their piece, "Kant on Virtue and the Virtues." They offer an overview of Kant's conception of virtue and discuss his views on education and moral self-improvement. Kant's most thorough discussion of virtue, they explain, is found in the Doctrine of Virtue, which is the second part of *The Metaphysics of Morals*. To be fully virtuous, for Kant, is to have a good will that is firmly resolved and fully ready to overcome temptations, both internal and external, to immorality. The aim of the virtuous is not only to avoid acting wrongly and to pursue moral ends, but also to do so for the right reasons. The good will is that faculty that enables imperfect humans to act for the right reasons—that is, to act from respect for the Moral Law. Virtue is the strength of will always to do our duty and to act from right reasons. Though we cannot attain it in this life, perfect virtue is, nonetheless, an end to which we should aspire.

Kant's conception of virtue has several interesting features. First, unlike some ancient virtue theorists, Kant maintains that we all have the capacity to become virtuous. This is because being and becoming virtuous depend so heavily on choice. We should strive to become virtuous and can become virtuous despite impediments, such as innate personality traits and early upbringing, which might not conduce to virtue. Second, like other virtue theories, Kant's account has several roles for feelings. Third, Kant does not hold that success is a condition of being virtuous; that is, the moral goodness or virtue of the agent does not depend upon the results she achieves. Fourth, Kant takes an interesting position on the question of the unity of the virtues. *Virtue* is the strength of will to fulfill our duties, whereas *virtues* are commitments to specific moral ends. If, from a sense of duty, I set the happiness of others as a moral end and structure my choices around that commitment, I have the virtue of generosity. It is a duty of virtue to be generous in this sense. Kant maintains that there is only one virtue: the second-order commitment to do one's duty for the sake of duty, but he denies that particular virtues, such as generosity or courage, mutually entail one another. The authors go on to discuss Kant's list of virtues and vices, and explain how virtue fulfills our moral nature. Though virtue fulfills us morally and can help us to be cheerful and tranquil, Kant acknowledges that we can be virtuous but also destitute, despised, and unhappy.

Kant's views on moral education include discussions of the education of children and adolescents, as well as the duty of moral self-improvement possessed by adults. The education of children is rule-governed: children

are taught to conform their behavior to rules by being subjected to family rules, school rules, and the rules of games. These rules are meant to train children to control their emotions, and to curb their "lawless freedom," while yet allowing them to develop naturally. The authors note that Kant's account of these rules, as well as his views of the nature of punishment, are similar to his ideas about the state and legal punishment. The education of the adolescent is meant to enable her to make "good use" of freedom under constraints—that is, to elicit her nascent sense of dignity—and to foster her ability to represent to herself a sense of duty. Adolescents should be given moral problems to ponder in order to develop and encourage rational habits of moral approval and disapproval, among other desiderata. Upon reaching adulthood, an individual's rational capacities should be sufficiently developed so that she is able to continue perfecting her moral powers. The authors discuss the duty of moral self-improvement in terms of Kant's scheme of perfect and imperfect duties, and conclude their piece by considering objections and replies.

In "Cultivating Virtue: Two Problems for Virtue Ethics," Christine Swanton examines two problems internal to virtue ethics that apparently arise from the commitment to be virtuous and to develop one's virtue. They are the self-centeredness objection—that is, the claim that virtue ethics requires the agent to focus on her own virtue and flourishing, thereby undervaluing the regard due to others; and the charge that virtue ethical criteria of right action, which rely on the notion that right action is what the virtuous person would characteristically do, cannot account for acts that should be taken by imperfect agents seeking to improve their virtue.

Though arising in several answerable forms, the self-centeredness objection, Swanton contends, is especially problematic for virtue ethics when it is making a particular claim about the deep structure of the virtuous agent's motivation. The claim is that having virtue is the most practically important aspect of an agent's life, and that the virtuous agent must subordinate everything else to this end. Swanton maintains that arguments against the objection in the form in which it relies on this claim fail, then argues that virtue ethics is not committed to the value structure at the heart of the self-centeredness objection. She draws on her own view of virtue ethics as pluralistic and non-eudaimonistic to make her case. What makes traits virtues, she contends, is not their contribution to the flourishing of their possessor, but their targets or aims. What motivates the agent who seeks to be virtuous is the desire to attain the targets of virtue, and developing virtue is secondary to that aim. This circumvents the self-centeredness objection, and derails the notion that the desire to cultivate virtue must always be self-centered or egoistic.

Swanton also uses her account of virtue ethics to answer the charge that virtue ethical theories of right action cannot explain the rightness of actions taken by imperfect agents in efforts to cultivate their virtue. She proposes an aspirational virtue of self-improvement, and offers a "thick" description of it in terms of extent, motive, time, people, manner, and instruments for its sustenance, such as good political structures. This account draws on a variety of philosophical and psychological views to show how the virtue is dynamic and satisfies the conditions that Aristotle puts on virtue, while not being overly burdensome or self-consuming for the agent. Swanton also describes various perils into which unwary self-improvers might fall, such as susceptibility to feelings of self-righteousness and sanctimoniousness.

Self-improvement is central to the Confucian tradition in ethics. Edward Slingerland mines the insights of early Confucians to offer responses to the situationist critique of virtue ethics in his chapter, "The Situationist Critique and Early Confucian Virtue Ethics." A reworked version of the article that originally appeared in *Ethics*, the piece offers empirical as well as conceptual critiques of the situationist challenge, then explores the views of early Confucians, such as Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, on virtue education. Situationism interprets classical virtue ethics as setting a "high bar" for living virtuously, but the early Confucian tradition, through a combination of rigorous education and carefully chosen situational reinforcements, offers ways for learners of virtue to meet the challenge.

The situationist critique of virtue ethics is the argument, made most prominently by Gilbert Harman and John Doris, that social psychological studies show that global traits—traits that produce behavior that is consistent across different types of situations—either do not exist or exist so rarely that they are unlikely to have significant effects on behavior. Most philosophical traditions assume that virtues are global traits—that if a person is honest, for example, he will be honest in business dealings, when under oath in court, in taking tests, and so on. The non-existence or paucity of such traits, situationists contend, should force us to abandon virtue ethics. Empirical studies show that situations have far more effect on behavior.

Slingerland criticizes situationism on a variety of grounds. First, he adduces psychological studies to show that the person–situation debate in psychology is passé. Second, he criticizes the situationists' reading of the 0.3 personality coefficient for correlations of traits with behavior across situations, contending that it is more significant than situationists typically allow. Finally, he criticizes the conceptual distinction between local and global traits, arguing that there is no analytic dichotomy between such traits, but instead, a spectrum. What counts as local and global traits is

often determined pragmatically. Despite these drawbacks, situationism has a point that needs to be addressed: classical virtue traditions assume that virtuous behavior must approach 1.0. Virtuous people are not allowed to steal or cheat only once or a few times; they must strive to be virtuous at all times. Early Confucian virtue ethics, Slingerland argues, offers a program for how this might be achieved. Rigorous training in virtue, or extension, helps learners to develop their positive traits and curb their negative tendencies. This helps learners to clear the situationists' "bar." Yet the bar is lowered by the ongoing presence of situational factors, such as ritual practice, the study of ancient texts, the presence of a teacher, and other environmental stimuli that chronically prime learners to think, feel, and act virtuously. The combination of a lowered bar and intensive education helps Confucian learners to "jump" the situationist hurdle. Or so we can hope—a hope that is reinforced, Slingerland notes, by recent psychological work on roles for nonconscious processing in the acquisition of virtue.

Owen Flanagan takes readers into the complexities of Buddhism in "It Takes a Metaphysics: Raising Virtuous Buddhists." Flanagan offers a rational reconstruction of Buddhist moral education by advancing the view that Buddhism requires learners to know more than the ethical truths espoused by their tradition: it requires them to absorb key metaphysical truths that ground a calling or commitment. Buddhists must feel and embrace this calling to be able to live their lives in accordance with Buddhism's distinctive, and very demanding, set of values. Flanagan's aim is to answer a central question: How do Buddhists get from the "is" of metaphysical and natural facts to the "ought" of living a certain kind of ethical life?

Though Buddhism has many sects and invokes many concepts, the common core that Flanagan identifies consists of the Four Noble Truths the Noble Eightfold Path, and the Four Immeasurables. These doctrines contain diagnoses of the human condition, such as the notion that all sentient beings suffer, as well as ethical prescriptions and prohibitions for relieving this suffering. At one level, what seems required of the Buddhist practitioner is that some actions be taken and others avoided—a kind of continence. But at a deeper level, more challenging self-cultivation is required. At this level, the Buddhist is trying to develop difficult dispositions that should be universal in applicability, such as the Four Immeasurables—compassion, loving-kindness, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. These are the virtues possessed by the saint or sage who is on the verge of enlightenment. Why struggle to attain these, and other demanding Buddhist virtues? To answer this, a rather complex story needs to be told.

Naturalistic as well as non-naturalistic versions of Buddhism and of the motivations for Buddhist virtue cultivation are available. Flanagan opts for

a naturalistic understanding. His story recognizes the deeply integrated Buddhist worldview, according to which metaphysical doctrines, such as impermanence, dependent origination, and "no-self" are the background conditions within which Buddhist ethical strictures are to be understood and taught. We suffer because we seek permanence in an impermanent world and because our egos separate ourselves from others with whom we are dependently related. There are no unique essences, including persons. Though we perceive individuated entities, they are in reality aspects of being that is in a continual state of unfolding. We must come to understand these and other truths through instruction in philosophy, and to grasp some of them in non-conceptual ways through mindfulness practices, such as forms of meditation. Yet none of these ideas, Flanagan argues, is sufficient to ground the "ought" of Buddhist ethics. We could accept Buddhism's metaphysical doctrines and become nihilists. The crucial moment in the psychology of moral development is when the Buddhist learner experiences an overpowering desire or "calling" which, due to prior philosophical reflection, she has no reason to refuse. To embrace this calling is to enter fully the stream of Buddhist life.

In "Islam and the Cultivation of Character: Ibn Miskawayh's Synthesis and the Case of the Veil," Elizabeth Bucar uses the writings of the tenth-century Islamic thinker Ibn Miskawayh to elucidate an Islamic view of virtue and apply it to the practice of veiling. In the first part of her chapter, she introduces the thought of Ibn Miskawayh, and in the second, she analyzes the practice of veiling and the virtue of modesty in terms of the framework his work provides. She concludes with some observations about the virtue of modesty in contemporary contexts.

Sacred texts, Bucar explains, are not the only sources of Islamic ethics. Ethics in the Islamic tradition has been articulated through various "special sciences." Among these, Islamic jurisprudence, or *fiqh*, has been perceived to hold pride of place in matters of morals rules and codes. The cultivation of virtue and character is the province of another special science, namely *adab*, or Islamic etiquette. *Adab* tells practitioners of Islam how to acquire manners, morals, and character. Ibn Miskawayh's writings contribute to this area; indeed, he is regarded as the father of Islamic virtue ethics, as his writings attempt to synthesize revealed truths of Islam and the insights of ancient Greek philosophy. Ibn Miskawayh adopts Plato's view of the soul as a self-subsisting entity, and Aristotle's conception of virtue as an entrenched, habituated disposition that goes "all the way down"—that is, as deeply embedded in the personality of the agent. Yet he views human nature as religious; we are creatures of God and follow a divine plan. Character formation is a process of perfecting the soul for God. Three aspects of Ibn Miskawayh's view are crucial: the centrality of bodily practices, the habitu-

ation of sexual appetites, and the social dimensions of virtue. Through bodily practices we are able to grow in virtue. Frequently, the action precedes the virtuous intention or disposition. We act as if we are virtuous first, then eventually come to be virtuous. Sexual appetites, though not intrinsically evil, need to be regulated and properly ordered in a virtuous life. Finally, virtue is a public or social matter. We become virtuous with and through the influence of others, and we strive to achieve societies that exemplify forms of corporate virtue.

With this framework in hand, Bucar explains the practice of veiling and its centrality to the virtue of modesty by addressing the questions: What does veiling ethically do? and, What role does veiling play in character formation? Her aim is to reveal veiling as something more than a symbol of religious fundamentalism: it is a practice that helps Muslims to acquire virtue. Though Qur'anic texts on veiling raise interpretative difficulties, they have implications for the modesty of both men and women. Men are instructed to avert their gazes; women, to cover various body parts. The idea is that women must cover themselves in certain ways in order to affect how men look at them. Women are admonished to dress and act, and men, to act in ways designed to avoid inflaming illicit sexual desires. Veiling takes place in public. It is an ethical practice that creates a "public virtue zone," in which Muslim men and women are reminded of the need for, and encouraged to strive toward, sexual modesty.

In her concluding observations, Bucar points out two interesting dimensions of veiling. First, veiling is a gendered practice. Might it be true that the Islamic virtue of modesty is also gendered? Second, what counts as modesty in dress and comportment varies in different Muslim countries in the twenty-first century. Does this entail relativism—that modesty itself, and perhaps other Islamic virtues, vary according to time and place? Perhaps not, as Bucar identifies three common features of Islamic modesty: its focus on women; its insistence on personal dispositions, and not merely outward dress and behavior; and its contribution to a visual culture of Islam: shared images and perceptions co-construct personal religious identity and virtue.

Jennifer A. Herdt explores the history of character cultivation in the Christian tradition in "Frailty, Fragmentation, and Social Dependency in the Cultivation of Christian Virtue." Herdt stresses that Christianity is a living tradition of character formation; Christians have been interested not only in a correct understanding of reality but also in moral ways of living— ways that bring believers closer to God through the emulation of Christ. Christ is the exemplar for those who want freedom from sin and death, and he provides the power to emulate him for those seeking to do so. How Christ is best emulated is a complex story with many levels of interpretation, but at the heart of it, Herdt contends, is the need for character formation.

Though some early Christians emulated Christ through the idealization of martyrdom and ascetic practice, others believed that another path was open to people in all walks of life. They found sustenance in the writings of the *Didache*, an early list of precepts whose central commandment was to love—love God, one's neighbors, one's enemies, and oneself. The commandment to love, Herdt maintains, was at bottom an injunction to character formation. Christians should become people with certain kinds of characters, intentions, and motives. Practices relating to self-control and meditation, which can be conceptualized as forms of spiritual exercises, were stressed. By the fourth century, two common factors had emerged: the centrality of love and humility. Humility is crucial to the story of Christian character, for it highlights human dependency on God's grace, frailty in the face of temptation and sin, and egalitarianism—we are all weak and sinful before God. Practices of self-examination and of repentance and individual and communal healing went along with the stress on humility.

Christian theologians and philosophers transformed many debates about the virtues from ancient Greek and Roman thinkers. The medieval scholastics, especially Aquinas, brought thinking about virtue to new levels of systematicity. Aquinas saw that the final end of humankind, fellowship with God, could not be attained without divine grace. Faith, hope, and charity were three theological virtues that are infused in us through the sacraments to help us achieve that end, but so, too, were many other moral virtues supplemented by divine power in order properly to orient us beyond the end of human happiness. The Reformation theologian Martin Luther repudiated virtue, with its resonances in pagan philosophy. He emphasized grace and not works. Communities that embraced Luther's thought formed Christian character through practices such as prayer, corporate worship, preaching, fasting, and meditation. In the twentieth century, philosophers as well as Catholic and Protestant theologians have again become interested in virtue. Many of the characteristics of virtue in the Christian tradition, Herdt argues, could indemnify it against recent situationist attacks on Aristotelian virtue. For example, recognizing the fragility of virtue and the need for God's grace to sustain it, as well as the injunction to see others as neighbors, are aspects of Christian virtue that offer a more realistic picture of humanity's prospects than Aristotelianism.

Darcia Narvaez takes an evolutionary view of the conditions needed for the development of virtue in "The Co-Construction of Virtue: Epigenetics, Development, and Culture." She identifies the care conditions necessary for the healthy growth of the physiological and brain capacities required for virtue, and calls this environment, the "evolved developmental niche" (EDN). Depending on the early care a child receives, he or she can come to have

different ethical orientations, each with multiple subtypes: the Safety ethic, the Engagement ethic, or the Imagination ethic. Narvaez contends that the conditions for developing the optimal ethical orientation, the Imagination ethic, are found in hunter-gatherer societies, and offers suggestions for how the wisdom of hunter-gatherers can be reclaimed for virtue cultivation in our own day and age.

Proper brain and body functioning, Narvaez contends, are required for the development of capacities, such as perception, attention, emotional self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, all of which are needed for virtue. Scientific studies support the view that forms of early caregiving, such as frequent touch, breastfeeding, play, nurturing social support, and even natural childbirth, are vital for the development of these capacities. These forms of care mark the optimal environment of early nurturance, the EDN. Though care received under these conditions can set children on the path to virtue, there are ways in which care can go awry. Narvaez explores these by reference to the triune ethics theory. According to this theory, the Safety ethic is the most primitive moral response, focusing on "me and mine." It develops through undercare in early childhood. More promising is the Engagement ethic, which gives rise to prosocial, compassionate response, is fostered in the EDN, and is primed by caring, supportive relationships. The most highly evolved ethic is the Imagination ethic, which uses abstraction, deliberation, and imagination to expand capacities for empathic engagement beyond face-to-face interaction.

Hunter-gatherer societies, Narvaez argues, support the EDN for children and others throughout life. Allowing for autonomy yet emphasizing community, such societies stress social interconnections as well as unity with nature. Contemporary Western societies do not emphasize these interconnections, and, indeed, create conditions that undermine them. In Narvaez's view, these conditions constitute cultures of competitive detachment within which the EDN is not supported. The recovery of hunter-gatherer values and mindsets, she contends, can be achieved by emphasizing cultures of cooperative companionship, which rekindle the need for and value of "being with" others and the world in interdependent relationships, as well as autopoeisis, or the active participation of the self in its own development and organization. Companionship virtue and autopoesis in virtue development are ways in which mindful morality and communal imagination can take hold.

Moral development in early childhood is Ross A. Thompson's topic in "The Development of Virtue: A Perspective from Developmental Psychology." Thompson reviews a number of psychological studies of children under the age of five years that counter common misconceptions of toddlers as either egoists or as budding altruists. Studies of early childhood provide evidence

of the emergence of a premoral sensibility that could serve as the foundation for further character development.

Studies show that twelve- to eighteen-month-old toddlers interpret the actions of people they watch in terms of inferred goals and intentions. This seems to be evidence of early social understanding, which, researchers believe, is nonegocentric in the sense that young children do not confuse their own intentions and goals with those of the adults they observe. These achievements provide the basis for a range of skills and capacities which, taken together, shape the contours of a premoral sensibility. For example, studies indicate that toddlers are capable of shared intentionality—that is, the ability to have psychological states similar to those of others, including shared goals and intentions. Shared intentionality is essential for cooperative, prosocial behavior. Studies suggest that young children engage in such behavior as result of spontaneously understanding, sharing, and knowing how to assist in the achievement of others' goals, and not from the desire to obtain extrinsic rewards. Experiments also reveal that toddlers are able to appraise others' behavior in terms of its effects on goal attainment, punish those who obstruct the efforts of others to reach goals, reward those who help, and provide benefits to those who are victimized. Emotion understanding is another aspect of a premoral sensibility that young children display. Young children show skills in interpreting others' emotions, including capacities for empathy. In agreement with Slote's general line of argument, Thompson contends that these abilities are important for moral development, as parents often enlist emotional responses in attempts to teach children about values and how to behave morally.

Young children's' premoral sensibility is an important precursor for further moral development. The foundations of conscience, for example, seem to be established in early childhood—evidence for this is found in studies of children as young as age two and a half. "Conscience" is understood by developmental psychologists to refer to the processes by which children construct and act consistently with internal generalizable standards of conduct. Echoing themes from Narvaez, studies show that the quality of parent-child relationships is crucial to the growth of conscience and individual differences in moral conduct. Finally, Thompson discusses research on moral identity, or the construction of a sense of self around moral values. Significantly, a longitudinal study found correlations of conscience development in children from ages two to four and a half with the emergence of a "moral self" at age five and a half, and socially and emotionally competent behavior at age six and a half. Despite evidence for a developmental trajectory from a premoral sensibility through the growth of conscience and the formation of moral identity, Thompson notes that many questions remain unanswered.

In "Psychological Science and the *Nicomachean Ethics*: Virtuous Actors, Agents, and Authors," Dan P. McAdams draws on empirical work from a

variety of fields to advance a three-stage perspective of the development of virtue, ranging from infancy through adulthood. He argues that this tripartite developmental scheme is broadly consistent with the account of virtue given by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. According to this scheme, different layers of the self contribute to full virtue: the self as a social actor, as a motivated agent, and as an autobiographical author. Each layer represents a form of growth or maturation into virtue.

After briefly remarking on the death of situationism in psychology and recent trends in the empirical study of virtue, McAdams turns to an account of the earliest stage of virtue development, that of the social actor. This stage, he believes, resonates with Aristotle's views of how families and the state must provide the social supports and guidance needed to habituate and educate children into virtuous behavior. Temperament and sociality are key influences here. As social beings, we are taught to be virtuous. Social action that ostensibly accords with virtue precedes action produced by the motivation or desire to act virtuously. A child might share her toys, for example, only because her parents tell her to and not because she genuinely desires to be fair or generous. Moreover, temperament makes a difference to the personality traits children come to have as well as to how they develop in virtue. Positive emotionality can give rise to extraversion, prosocial behavior, and hope, whereas negative emotionality can lead to neuroticism. Being low in neuroticism correlates with virtues such as humility and serenity. Effortful control can lead through experiences of empathy and guilt to agreeableness and conscientiousness. These traits provide resources for the development of several virtues, including prudence, order, and resolution.

Consistently with studies mentioned by Thompson, ages five through seven mark notable advances in the child's development. Several developmental psychologists note that during this period, the child becomes capable of rational choice and deliberation. She acquires personal goals and begins to exercise her own agency in pursuit of them. She comes to see herself as a motivated agent. Her agency does not supplant her traits, but is layered in with them. At this second stage, the child displays genuine virtue. The third stage McAdams discusses is that of the autobiographical author. Here he invokes Aristotle's views on wisdom and contemplation. This is the pinnacle of virtue, available only to the mature, perhaps older, adult. The autobiographical author takes a retrospective view of her life; she is able to look back over the years and form a narrative that gives her life meaning. McAdams and others have found evidence that the lives of moral exemplars who excel in specific virtues, such as caring or courage, are sometimes characterized by redemption sequences—accounts of emerging from hardship or other negative experiences strengthened, or with insight, or transformed. Such individuals, whose narratives are often influenced by their cultures, display high

levels of generativity through activities, such as teaching, mentoring, and other forms of prosocial involvement, aimed at leaving a positive legacy.

I have given the psychologists the last word in this volume for two reasons. One is that their work reinforces, from a scientific perspective, views articulated earlier in the collection by philosophers and theologians. The other is that their contributions necessarily remain open-ended. As Thompson points out, there is much about virtue development that we do not know. So we end, then, not only by presenting new perspectives on virtue cultivation but also with an invitation to readers to press ahead with their own ideas on this subject. The positive legacy of this volume, I hope, will be to move research on virtue cultivation forward.

NOTES

1. See Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Michael Slote, *Moral Sentimentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), and *Morals From Motives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Christine Swanton, *Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Daniel C. Russell, *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
2. For Kantianism, see, for example, Anne Margaret Baxley, *Kant's Theory of Virtue: The Value of Autocracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For utilitarianism, see Julia Driver, *Uneasy Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
3. Notable exceptions include Julia Annas, *Intelligent Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); David Carr and Jan Steutel, eds., *Virtue Ethics and Moral Education* (New York: Routledge, 1999); and Brad K. Wilburn, ed., *Moral Cultivation: Essays on the Development of Character and Virtue* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).
4. Slingerland's essay is a reworked version of the article that originally appeared in *Ethics*.

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